

how do I **find** a therapist?

First of all, you can use the **Kink-Aware Professionals (KAP) website** owned by the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom (NCSF):

www.kinkawareprofessionals.org

On this website, you can search for kink-aware professionals across the U.S. and other countries. If you don't find someone in your immediate vicinity, don't despair. Call a practitioner in the nearest city or town and ask if he or she can recommend a therapist in your area.

Local kink-related groups are a good choice for seeking a therapy referral. If your local community has a message board or email list, you can also ask for referrals from those resources.

Your **local LGBT resource center** may be another good referral source. If you are unable to find a kink-aware professional, a therapist who maintains an LGBT-friendly practice may be a good alternate choice.

Another way to find a therapist is to **ask your friends and family** if they have had a positive experience with a kink-aware professional.

When taking a referral from a friend or family member, it's always a good idea to consider whether you or the referral source will feel comfortable working with the same therapist. It is up to you (and your friend or family member) to decide. Some therapists also have policies about whether they will treat people who are closely involved with one another.

how **you** can help

The NCSF relies overwhelmingly on contributions from individuals and local BDSM, swing and polyamory groups for financial support. Ask your group to organize a fundraiser for NCSF, and contact us at info@ncsfreedom.org to find out how easy it can be!

You can also participate in NCSF activities, ranging from writing letters to the media and government officials, to joining in community outreach. Get information about NCSF actions, as well as coverage of mainstream news concerning sexual freedom issues, by subscribing to our free newsletter at www.ncsfreedom.org.

Mission Statement

The NCSF is committed to advancing the rights of consenting adults in the BDSM-Leather-Fetish, Swing, and Polyamory communities through education, advocacy, and outreach.

The Foundation of the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom (FNCSF) is NCSF's 501(c)(3) charitable foundation. It provides educational programs related to our mission. Tax-deductible donations support the projects of our foundation.



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finding a **Kink-Aware Therapist**

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how do I know which one is right for me?

Once you have a list of potential therapists, decide whether the therapist's degree and training are important to you. This is a matter of personal preference. Some prefer to work with psychology professionals who hold doctorates, some prefer those who have had different types of training. Many decide that the level of training matters less than experience, personality and how it feels to talk to the therapist.

For More Information

To learn more about the different types of degrees for therapists or counselors, go to our website to access the complete guide, *Choosing a Kink-Aware Therapist*.

Go to:

www.kinkawareprofessionals.org

or

www.ncsfreedom.org/keyprograms

Click on the **guide** link to access *Choosing a Kink-Aware Therapist*.

what questions should I ask?

Call a few therapists for more information when you are ready to set up an initial appointment. Make a list of questions that you would like to ask a therapist.

Some suggestions for questions are:

- 1) What is your license?
- 2) How long have you been practicing?
- 3) Can you describe your style?
- 4) Do you do short- or long-term treatment? How frequently do you meet with your clients (once a week or more)?
- 5) What do you charge?
- 6) What is your payment policy? Do you accept insurance?
- 7) What is your cancellation policy?
- 8) Do you have an area of expertise or specialty?
- 9) Is your practice LGBT friendly?
- 10) Are you familiar with alternative forms of sexual expression? What are your beliefs about it? (You may want to state your specific community – BDSM, swing, polyamory, fetish, etc.)
- 11) Do you consider your practice kink-friendly? How many kinky clients have you worked with?

is it okay to shop around?

It is okay to say no. It is appropriate to speak briefly with a therapist on the phone and even to decline their offer of an initial appointment. You do not have to offer a reason, or you can simply say that you do not think you are a good fit.

However, sometimes the fit is best assessed by how you feel when you talk to this therapist in person. Do you feel understood and heard? Did you have a good interaction? If you are in the middle of a painful process, therapy can be difficult and provoke feelings of sadness, anger, or pain, but you should not feel that the therapist is the cause of these feelings.

It is okay to meet with several different therapists when you are deciding which one makes you the most comfortable.

Once you have chosen a therapist, you should not meet with more than one person.

Kinky is NOT a diagnosis.

It is important to find a therapist who understands and supports your lifestyle. BDSM, fetishes, swinging and polyamory are not pathological disorders. Rather they can be a healthy part of your life and identity.

You deserve to find a therapist who has information about the diversity and range of healthy, adult sexual expression.

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